District Review Report

School District No. 28 (Quesnel)

March 28-31, 2004

Submitted to the Minister of Education

By District Review Team Chair
Nancy Wells, Superintendent, School District No. 74 (Gold Trail)

District Review Report

2003/2004

District Name:	Quesnel
District Number:	28
Superintendent:	Ed Napier
Date of Visit:	March 28 – 31, 2004
Team Chair:	Nancy Wells, Superintendent, School District No. 74 (Gold Trail)
Team Members:	Sara Davidson, Teacher, SD 50 (Haida Gwaii/Queen Charlotte) Janine Fernandes, Education Officer, Ministry of Education Judy MacPherson, Parent, SD 8 (Kootenay Lake) Patrick Moores, Superintendent, SD 92 (Nisga'a) Ray Myrtle, Teacher, SD 41 (Burnaby) Diana Samchuck, Superintendent, SD 81 (Fort Nelson) Ann Skelcher, Principal, SD 46 (Sunshine Coast)

Context

The Quesnel School District is situated in Central British Columbia on the traditional lands of the Carrier and Chilcotin First Nations and serves 30,000 people, who reside in Quesnel and approximately 20 outlying communities.

The School District provides a comprehensive education program to 4,640 students, 17.6% of whom are of Aboriginal ancestry. Schools include two secondary, 15 elementary, 1 continuing education, 1 alternative, and 1 multicultural with 40% enrolling in K-7 French Immersion.

Over 2,400 students are transported daily in 30 school buses that run approximately 5,000 kilometres per day. The average time that students spend on the bus is 45 minutes each way and some students ride as long as 2 hours and 20 minutes each way, to and from school.

The District has been experiencing decreasing enrolments over the past seven years and the school age student enrolment has decreased by approximately 22% during that time. The Aboriginal student population, however, continues to increase each year. These trends are expected to continue.

Relationships among District partners are open, inclusive, and collaborative with a clear focus on improving student achievement for all learners.

Summary of Process

The Review Team was welcomed with an informal dinner meeting with Board of School Trustee representatives including the chairperson and vice-chairperson, Superintendent of Schools, President and Vice-President Quesnel District Parent Advisory Council, President Carpenters Union Local 2545, President Quesnel District Teachers Association, Chair and Co-Chair Quesnel Principals' and Vice Principals' Association, Director of Instruction, Secretary Treasurer, Principal Aboriginal Education, District Principal Operations and Director of Human Resources.

The formal review began with a welcome and prayer by Geneva Irwin of the Red Bluff Band, Lhtakot'en Nation and included a presentation by District staff on the School District Accountability Contract and information about school district student performance. The meeting was attended by District Parent Advisory Council representatives, the President of the Quesnel District Teachers Association, the Chair and Co-Chair Quesnel Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association, trustees and District staff.

Subsequently, visits were made to a number of schools where meetings took place with the School Planning Councils and other school representatives including students. Barlow Creek, Bouchie Lake, Carson, Dragon Lake, Ecole Baker, Kersley, Lakeview, Nazko Valley, Parkland, Red Bluff, Riverview, Voyageur/West Fraser and Wells Elementary schools, Correlieu and Quesnel Secondary schools, Continuing Education and McNaughton Center were visited by team members.

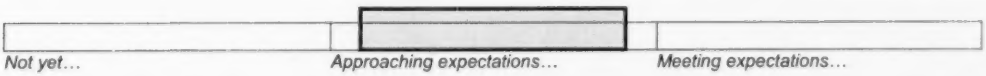
The team met with the Superintendent of Schools and the Director of Instruction to consider additional information regarding the review.

At the conclusion of its review the District Review Team provided a debriefing to the District at a meeting attended by Board of School Trustees representatives including the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson, Superintendent of Schools, President and Vice-President Quesnel District Parent Advisory Council, President Carpenters Union Local 2545, President Quesnel District Teachers Association, Chair and Co-Chair Quesnel Principals' and Vice-Principals' Association, Director of Instruction, Secretary Treasurer, Principal Aboriginal Education, District Principal Operations and Director of Human Resources.

The District Team appreciated the warm hospitality of the Quesnel School District and the comprehensive material provided by both the district and the schools.

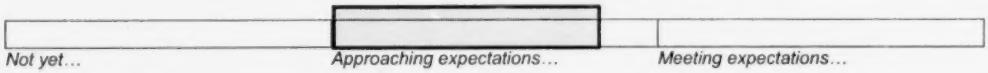
Observations in Key Areas - Focus on Student Achievement

1. *Goals:*
   Improving districts and schools have a strong instructional focus. This focus is made visible in relevant goals for improving achievement for all students.



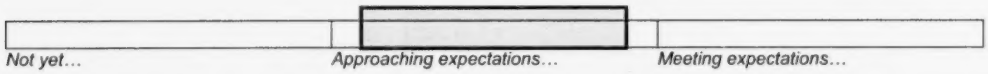
- The District has established five goals that support student achievement.
- Schools goals are linked to the district goals.
- All schools have established goals focused on student achievement.

2. *Rationale:*
Improving districts and schools have a thorough and connected set of reasons, **based on evidence**, for the selection of their student achievement goals.



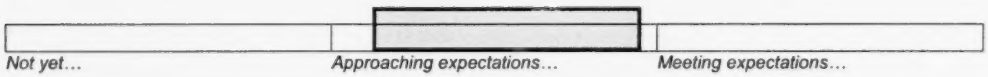
- The District is supporting schools in becoming evidence based.
- Schools are in various stages of using evidence to establish goals.
- In some schools there is a need to continue working at linking data to the development of their goals.

3. *Data:*
Improving districts and schools are actively considering at least three sources of evidence including classroom, school, district and provincial data. The analysis of this evidence informs the selection of the district goals and is used to monitor progress.



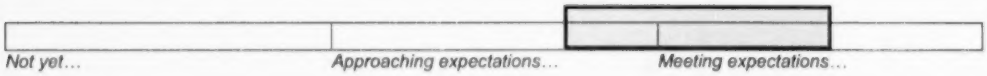
- At both the school and district levels most evidence has been gathered from provincial sources.
- The school district is in the process of developing district systems to collect, track, and analyze school and classroom based data.

4. *Strategies:*
Improving districts and schools have well organized, focused improvement plans in place. The strategies selected to achieve the goals are an intelligent blend of research, best practice, and innovative thinking.



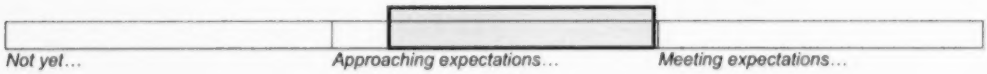
- The early literacy improvement plan uses well-organized, practical, research-based strategies.
- Strategies in numeracy, social development, Aboriginal student success, and personal/career goal areas are in various stages of development.
- Staff development plans in all goal areas are being established to support instructional improvement.

5. *Structures:*
Improving districts and schools have aligned structures – resources, time, organizations – to get the results they want. This includes, but is not limited to, effectively differentiating resources in the areas of highest need for improvement.



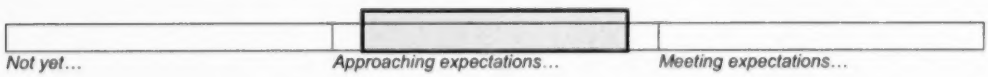
- The District has effectively aligned resources, time, and organization to achieve results.

6. *Results:*
Improving districts and schools get improved results – at the classroom, school and district levels.



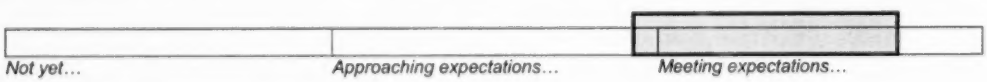
- At the district level student progress is evident as indicated by provincial data.
- There are promising results in the Early Literacy Program.
- In some schools, social development results are being used to monitor and adjust for improved student behaviour.

7. *Communication:*
Improving districts and schools are involved in continuous dialogue about student achievement and make public their improvement goals and the progress being made in specific areas of focus.



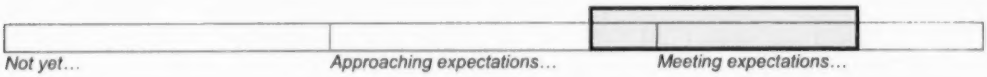
- Some schools communicate their improvement goals and progress to the public in multiple ways.
- There is effective dialogue within the District about student achievement.

8. *Teamwork – District and School Coherence*:
Improving districts and schools have an interactive strategy for connecting school and district goals. School uniqueness and school district directions are both valued.



- There is an inclusive and collaborative culture connecting schools and the District.
- School uniqueness and School District directions are mutually valued.

9. *Teamwork – District and Parent Involvement*:
   Improving districts and schools work as a team with parents, including specific groups of parents, to improve student achievement.



- Parents and parent groups are actively involved with the schools and the District to support programs.
- Most School Planning Councils are fulfilling their role in the development of School Growth Plans.

10. *Leadership / Teamwork:*
    Leaders in improving districts and schools have a clear vision for, and commitment, to improving achievement for all students. Leadership at all levels, in all roles, is encouraged and systematically developed in a collaborative learning community with a focus on improving student achievement.

- The District has created a positive learning community with a clear commitment to students.
- Shared leadership promotes student achievement.
- Leaders are respected throughout the organization.

Strengths

- Effective engagement with Aboriginal students and communities including the signing of the Aboriginal Enhancement Agreement
- A culture of collaboration and shared leadership
- A climate characterized by respect and integrity
- Effective and supportive district leadership
- A dynamic approach to challenges and opportunities
- Community partnerships
- Inclusive processes
- Parent involvement
- Early literacy improvement plan
- A strong alternate education system, including Continuing Education
- Professional learning through focus groups

Promising Practices

- Aboriginal family gatherings
- Presidents' Luncheon
- Formalized career partnerships
- Comprehensive Kindergarten screening in partnership with community
- Kindergarten literacy assessment in January and June
- Community and employer surveys to determine skills needed for local employment
- Aboriginal District Summer Literacy Camp
- Aboriginal Math n' Rec Program

Recommendations

We respectfully suggest that the District examine:

- The optimal number of goals to most effectively enhance student achievement.
- The development of assessment literacy among educators and parents in the District.
- The reflective use of data to inform classroom instruction.
- District wide use of an assessment tool such as BC Performance Standards.